

Citizens' Committee



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Dear Neighbors:

In the Echo Park neighborhood certain attempts are contemplated to establish restrictive covenants. These agreements are directed against people who have all citizen rights but who are non-Caucasians.

The appeal for your signature to one of these agreements will be made on the basis of "maintaining property values". Well, we agree each of us is interested in maintaining property values in whatever neighborhood we happen to live. We do not wish to let our surroundings deteriorate into slums and blighted areas. But it is not true, it is not correct, to blame a decline in property values on a so-called "infiltration of a minority group". This is high sounding nonsense.

Let us be specific: The presence of Negroes has been given in some places as the reason for a drop in property values. This is putting the cart before the horse, for Negroes as a rule, who have the smallest purchasing power of any American group, can afford to buy into a neighborhood only after the values have already dropped.

To turn one group against another does not improve our city, does not make better the community in which our boys and girls live. On the contrary it may produce only strife and hatred.

Instead of taking the restrictive covenant path of blaming another group, why not take the path of constructive betterment of the community? Better streets and sidewalks, improved play-fields nearby, schools of wholesome design reached without crossing lots of traffic, better street lighting and maintenance, more frequent and comfortable transportation, slum clearance, and a drive to keep yards, empty lots and public grounds tidy -- these are more positive ways of keeping property values high.


They should occupy our minds, no matter to what party or to what group we belong.

Now, to another phase of the restrictive covenant campaign. At one house meeting in the Echo Park neighborhood, it was suggested that "moral persuasion" be used to get certain newcomers to move on. But is there anything very "moral" about a grouping together of people for the purpose of frightening a fellow citizen by a ganged-up mass action directed at him, and driving

away a fellow human being from the home which he was lucky enough to find and to which he has brought his family in these troubled times?

It is more than doubtful whether people who advocate a restrictive covenant will make much headway in our community, and not unnecessary trouble for themselves. Such covenants are a violation of a number of existing laws. Many church and civic organizations have warned their membership of the evils of this sort of restrictive covenant. Within the past month, in a national report, the President's Commission of Civil Rights has taken a stand against restrictive covenants, and all sorts of legal counter-actions will be exploded against us, if we go into such persecutions.

Help keep our community a friendly place in which to live by declining to sign restrictive covenants, no matter how seemingly good the intentions of their backers, and inform your neighbors of your decision to keep the peace.



Dr. Herbert Alexander, Professor Sociology
George E. Bodle, Attorney-at-Law
Rev. Allan A. Hunter, Mt. Hollywood Cong. Church
Harry Koblick, A.B., Instructor City College
Raphael Koenigsberg, Social Worker
Rev. Thomas C. Marshall, Episcopal Church
Richard J. Neutra, S.A.I.A.
Percy Solotoy, Manufacturer
Keith Sward, Ph.D., Psychologist
Erich Stuewe, Marketing Research
Dr. A. M. Targow, M.D.

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EXCERPTS FROM STATEMENT BY

JUDGE STANLEY MOSK

ON RECENT COURT RESTRICTIVE COVENANT RULING

"The complainants had no 'cause of action' in the complaint because their claim the 'Negroes were violating a restrictive covenant' is inconsistent with the guarantees of the 14th amendment to the constitution.

"There is no allegation and no suggestion that any of these defendants would not be law abiding neighbors and citizens of the community. The only objection to them is their color and race.

"We read columns in the press each day about un-American activities. This court feels there is no more reprehensible un-American activity than to attempt to deprive persons of their own homes on a 'master race' theory.

"Our nation just fought against the Nazi 'race superiority' theory. One of these defendants was in that war and is a Purple Heart veteran.

"This court would indeed be callous to his constitutional rights if it were now to permit him to be ousted from his own home by using 'race' as the measure of his worth as a citizen and a neighbor.

"The alleged cause of action here is thus inconsistent with the guarantees of the 14th amendment to the constitution."